

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Out of concern that health care reform not hurt small businesses, U.S. Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) joined a bipartisan group of 49 Members of Congress that sent the following letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and House Minority Leader John Boehner.

---

Minority Leader John Boehner U.S. House of Representatives H-204 U.S. Capitol Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

As Members of Congress, we implore you to protect our nation's small businesses when crafting any health care reform legislation. We recognize that our country is facing a health care crisis and decisive action must be taken to fix our current system. However, it is equally important that our health care system supports – rather than impedes – the growth and recovery of our nation's small businesses.

Regardless of party affiliation, we all agree we must take action to reform health care. Skyrocketing costs and declining access have placed a heavy burden on families and businesses. Soon the House and Senate Committees will report a health care reform bill, and while we remain optimistic, we are concerned about the potential negative effects of this bill. Specifically, one of our primary concerns is the impact these proposals will have on America's small businesses.

Under current law, the cost for health care coverage falls heavily on small businesses; too many small businesses have to make the choice between providing health care coverage to their employees or making ends meet. Current federal law awards tax incentives to larger businesses allowing them to provide lower premiums to their employees while also keeping down administrative costs. Unfortunately, small businesses do not receive the same level of government incentives and thus, cannot make the same guarantees to their employees. This crippling cost of health care for small businesses means that only 36 percent of businesses with ten or fewer employees provide health care coverage.

Small businesses are the engine of our economy, employing more than 58 percent of the private workforce and creating 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs. If our economy is to be strong, then we must ensure that our small businesses are strong.

We therefore appeal that any health care reform policy considered by Congress be affordable for both small business owners and their employees. Any proposal that simply replaces one crippling expense with another is not reform at all, and is something we cannot support.

If we are to continue to rely on small businesses to drive our economy forward and lead our country toward recovery, we must protect the health of our small businesses as we work to protect the health of the American people. We look forward to working with you to author a health care package that is accessible and affordable for American small businesses and their employees.

June 16, 2009

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515